



[Jabulani Nxumalo, 1955 - 1991](#)

Comrade Mzala

“Cooking the Rice Inside the Pot” (**attached**) by Comrade Mzala (Jabulani Nxumalo) was written in 1985, the year of the ANC’s Kabwe (Zambia) conference.

It is our final item in Part 5 of the African Revolutionary Writers series.

Sixteen years after the Morogoro conference, and nine years after the 1976 events in which Mzala himself took part, victory was clearly certain, yet the path still had to be understood and pressed forward with determination and vigour.

What Mzala shows, and this is even more clear when taken together with the writings of Moses Kotane, Govan Mbeki and Oliver Tambo that we have used in this series, is that the armed struggle initiated on 16 December 1961 was crucial.

Any criticism of the armed struggle as such, whether it concentrates on MK as a whole or on any particular operations, misses the point that is made crystal clear by Mzala. The rice was always going to be cooked inside the pot, i.e. inside the country. The armed struggle was the way back to the “pot”. Both by example as well as by direct contact, the adoption of armed struggle by the ANC (which was also a turning-away from “passive resistance”) was essential. If there had been contradiction between the liberation movement and the popular masses on this point, it could have been disastrous.

The point is made very strongly when Mzala quotes Che Guevara thus: *“...guerrilla warfare is war by the entire people against the reigning oppression. The guerrilla movement is their armed vanguard; the guerrilla army comprises all the people of a region or country.”*

Mzala even finds support for his argument from a “racist general”, writing in the Johannesburg “Star” in 1973, saying: *“The objective for both sides in a revolutionary war is the population itself . . . military tactics and hardware are all well and good, but they are really quite useless if the government has lost the confidence of the people among whom it is fighting.”*

Mzala, writing in anticipation of victory, is careful to note that the popular masses cannot be taken for granted, illustrating this caution by reference to the Spanish experience.

But for us, now looking at the armed struggle in retrospect, this text is a powerful reminder of its crucial necessity and the central part that it has played in South Africa's liberation, to date.

Comrade Mzala was the author of the book "Gatsha Buthelezi - Chief with a Double Agenda", published by Zed Books in 1988. An account of the attempted suppression of that book in South Africa from 1991 can be downloaded [here](#) (556 KB PDF).

There is a short biography of Jabulani Nxumalo on the SACP web site [here](#), and an obituary written shortly after his death by Brian Bunting, [here](#).

The Communist University's "Mzala" archive is [here](#).

- The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [Jabulani Nxumalo \(Comrade Mzala\) Cooking the Rice Inside the Pot, 1985](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).